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The Prospect for the Common Carriers.

The railroads will presently be confronted with a volume of traffic greater than they can handle.

An immense, overwhelming movement of commodities is the outward and visible manifestation of prosperity. It suggests and it is commonly accepted as the realization of ideal conditions conducive to happiness and the common welfare.

To whose advantage should such conditions inure if not to that of the great common carriers?

A few years ago, before demagoguery gained a momentary ascendancy and upset the public confidence, we were met with a new proposition in the ethics of transportation, which might be phrased thus: Under certain conditions the net of a railroad is inversely as the magnitude of its gross.

In other words, after a fixed point in the operation of a railroad has been passed its net earnings decrease in a more or less exact proportion as its gross earnings increase.

A railroad which is earning \$10,000 a mile meets its fixed charges, discharges all its obligations, provides for renewals and betterments and distributes a satisfactory dividend to its stockholders.

As matters become more prosperous its earnings advance to \$12,500 a mile and it continues to meet its fixed charges, discharge all its obligations and distribute a satisfactory dividend to its stockholders. Renewals and betterments are overlooked.

With still increasing prosperity its earnings advance to \$15,000 a mile and it meets its fixed charges, discharges its obligations, goes head over heels in debt for renewals and betterments and distributes to its stockholders a dividend which it has not earned.

If prosperity maintains its increase and the gross earnings are still abruptly enlarged the railroad goes into the hands of a receiver.

There are railroads which may at no very distant time repeat this experience.

The strongest of our railroads have taken their recent lesson to heart and are prepared for a greater expansion in the transportation trade than has yet been known. With such roads the ratio of net to gross earnings will not be seriously changed by the increased movement. But for most railroads prosperity has its terrors, and they are even greater than those that follow in the wake of hard times. Everybody has to take his share of the latter, but in the former the railroad suffers alone.

On its surface the railroad condition of the present is the most hopeful and the most superficially satisfactory that has been known. The precipitate return to sanity, imposed by late conditions, has induced sound economic practice, and this is as apparent in the efficiency of the workers as it is in the abstracts of operation. How long will the railroads hold to this wholesome state of things? We do not know.

There are signs in the air that are disturbing. There are symptoms of an expansion that is premature. There is a race putting that is not prompted by the spirit of competition but is promoted by the everlasting personal equation and by advantages which if they exist are not intended for the public or for the stockholders.

As for the attitude of the Federal Government, it is of unimpeachable urbanity. In saying this we mitigate no particle of our disgust and abomination of the corporation income tax, a feeling engendered by its inherent dishonesty and the scandal of its partition. What we desire to imply is that no respectable and decently managed railroad has anything to fear from Mr. Taft or from his man VISHNU. There is nothing in danger except dishonesty, and if this Administration can extirpate from our corporation management whatever there remains in it of dishonesty it will do nothing else that will win it greater approbation.

The Sherman anti-trust act is to be amended, but its amendment need excite no alarm in any honest corporate soul. It is proposed to make it less of a "rule Appropriate for Guidance in the Violent Wards of a Lunatic Asylum" and more of an intelligible and reputable enactment. As it stands it is a disgrace. It was passed not to be enforced but for sheer demagoguery and vulgar trickery. It remained upon the tables of the law until it was taken up for purposes of blackmail and foul politics. The sooner there is an end to it the better.

No honest corporation, railroad or other, need now be timid about any proposed Federal enactment. What all corporations may well dread is the subtle intimidation of laws, existing or proposed, behind which lie blackmail and

coercion, and of which the enforcement can be evaded by cash or its equivalent in political abasement.

A railroad which is honestly administered is conducted in the interest of the public and in the interest of its stockholders. When the president or other responsible official of a railroad is a stockholder in a corporation from which that railroad buys its air brakes, or in another corporation from which it buys its electrical machinery, or in one which makes a specialty of car wheels, or in another which supplies the railroad its oil and grease, or in yet another from which it gets its coal, the chances are that that particular railroad is a defaulter to the public and is no more a respecter of the law than it is a respecter of the rights of its stockholders.

There is no serious trouble in sight for the railroads except the approach of a prosperity which will overtax the powers of too many of them. When James J. Hill, appalled people by proclaiming that the railroads needed a billion for betterment he would have been more nearly right had he said that they must have two billions, and that they must have it quick too!

The Council of Notables.

With due reverence to the Sage of Esopus and all the other excellencies and eminences that are so eager to lead the Democratic party of New York in the way it should go, it is not by valuable advice and directions from its chiefs and veronances that the party is to be made strong. No artificial and exterior impulse will serve. Whenever the Democracy can rise above the trough, can find leaders or a leader able to stir a generous enthusiasm among the mass of Democratic voters, can incarnate something better than "near graft" and the itch for office, then it will become strong and fortunate.

An Ancient Reproved.

It is among the habits of the Hon. JOSEPH GUNNY CANNON, we believe, to scatter reports of his intention to "retire" from Congress and then to contradict them with all his wealth of sulphurous and tormenting words. He lets the Danville district get just a glimpse of what it has and might lose. He spreads before a desolated country the prospect of a Cannonless Congress. After the wound the balm. Furious denials. No other man ever had such constituents. Never will he desert them. "When I get ready to retire I will say so."

Exactly. The venerable JOSEPH will leave Congress when he has to; and once he has to. He went, but he returned. And there is SHELBY CULLOM's officious record to bear.

No, the beautiful one of Danville is hard to lose; and we are not afraid of losing him. What we must reprove him for now is his ferocious answer to the question, however intentionally perfidious and bile arousing, if he would go on the Chautauqua circuit. Congress is something; Chautauqua is everything. It is the parliament of socialists, the nurse of riper statesmanship, the begetter of public opinion, the mother of reputations. Look at BRYAN, look at LA FOLLETTE. Is CANNON too old to learn? Is he content to be an early Accadian hunker when he might be an ecclesiast of Chautauqua and mould the veal of millions?

Secretary Meyer and His Boards.

The various boards of investigation and inquiry created by Mr. MEYER, the Secretary of the Navy, appear to have bewildered a great many honest persons. Naval affairs have always been enveloped in a species of mystery so far as concerns civilian minds, and it is to be considered furthermore that the coil in which the late Secretary NEWBERRY succeeded in involving them still baffles even the most experienced experts of the service. The fact that Mr. MEYER saw his way to light at all through the agency of only three boards strikes us as greatly to his credit.

When Mr. MEYER succeeded to the howling hurly burly bequeathed to him by the outgoing NEWBERRY he understood at first glance that he was in theoretical possession of a sort of pandemonium. He found the navy yards in control of the construction corps, a purely military establishment dominated by professional landmen. He found the line of the navy in open revolt or, disarmed by an unconquerable disgust, reduced to pessimistic inaction. The situation was impossible, as it was disheartening. Two boards were created, one to incorporate into the naval regulations all the ideas upon which both sides were agreed and the other to reconcile the disagreement in the light of law and common sense and add the results to the prevailing service code. These two boards appear to have done their duty and dispersed. It is about the third board, still in session and with perplexing questions still before it, that the country is wondering and setting up all sorts of guesswork.

We can imagine that Mr. MEYER's first and most pressing solicitude was to rescue the service from the asphyxiation to which it had been surrendered by Mr. NEWBERRY. That was an imperative precedent to any measure of regeneration. Assuming that this has been achieved and the navy practically reestablished in the position it occupied before Mr. NEWBERRY began to tinker with it, we come to the serious work of reorganization, which Mr. NEWBERRY thought he was undertaking and which he so nearly wrecked in the pursuit of his infatuation. It seems obvious that the navy yards must be refashioned, not only in the interests of economy and precision and military efficiency but for the sake of harmony and discipline as well. Mr. MEYER finds, however, that a thorough reorganization of the navy yards involves a still more thorough reconstruction of the bureau system, in which all the evils now visible in the navy yards find their authority and initiative. It is this condition that betrayed Mr. NEWBERRY into all his blunders, and it is a desire for the final termination of this which, presumably, animates Mr. MEYER in his present activities. Hence the third board still in existence and

beset by difficulties as numerous as they are momentous.

The Secretary of the Navy, even as things stand, has a great deal of power. He can reconstruct and readjust and in the end achieve a smoothly working machinery for efficiency and reform. But he is only one man. His successor may within his lawful rights undo the good work that has gone before and falling under specious and alluring influences restore the navy to ancient if not worse conditions. If we understand Mr. MEYER, he seeks to establish for the navy a legal and a continuing policy, one that cannot be made the plaything of every political incumbent who finds favor in high quarters.

The question is if Congress, even with a complete and comprehensive system prepared for it, will act favorably.

Turkish M. P. Visiting London.

Scarcely had the deputation from Russia's third Duma departed from the British metropolis when it was succeeded by some twenty representatives of the Imperial Ottoman Parliament, headed by SULEIMAN BUSTANI Effendi, who received an even more cordial welcome. At a banquet given in their honor at the Hotel Cecil the Earl of ONSLOW presided, and Lord CURZON of Kedleston made a remarkable speech in which were set forth the grounds for England's sympathy with Turkey's awakening.

Lord CURZON began by pointing out that during the latter half of the nineteenth century a friendship amounting at times to an alliance had existed between Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire. The statesmen of the two countries had cooperated at the council table, and their soldiers had fought side by side on the battlefield. More than once had England intervened to prevent the premature disruption of Turkey. Attention was also directed to the fact that although none of the British territories marched with the Ottoman frontiers in Europe, yet at Aden the two empires were contiguous. Then, again, the English administered Cyprus and helped to administer Egypt, while in India the British sovereign ruled over a larger number of Mohammedan subjects than acknowledged the sway of any monarch in the world except their own.

Lord CURZON went on to show how the sympathy which for generations had existed between Britons and Mohammedans had leaped into a new flame when the spectacle was witnessed of the emancipation of Turkey from the evil influences which had threatened its liberties and its life. The work undertaken by Young Turkey, so called, was the regeneration of old Turkey. The task to which the Young Turks have set themselves is not merely the reform of abuses, nor merely the letting of light into dark places, but the sincere acceptance and vigorous application to their country of the principle now recognized by all civilized and enlightened states, that government should be conducted not in the interests of those who administer it, but in the interests of the governed. So far as the Ottoman Empire is concerned the adoption of this principle is absolutely new.

The conviction was expressed by Lord CURZON that the Young Turks had introduced parliamentary government and a constitutional régime because they found in those innovations the sole permanent guarantees against tyranny and oppression, espionage and corruption, and the sacrifice of national to personal interests. Nor was there any reason to doubt that one of the main objects of the new political system would be to prevent in regenerated Turkey a recurrence of those international feuds which under the older form of government had done much to alienate the good will and shock the conscience of the civilized world. There were indications of the successful accomplishment of the task. A stubborn and virile character was that of the Osmanli. All the best and most ardent spirits in the country were enlisted on the side of the Young Turks, who had built up a reputation for moderation and statesmanship by their conduct of affairs. England, indeed, could not withhold her admiration from the measured and well organized steps by which in the first instance the Turkish reformers had set up their parliamentary machinery.

Neither could Englishmen, Lord CURZON added, fail to respect the dignity with which the Young Turks bore themselves when almost in the first month of their triumph a moral blow was dealt by Austria at their national honor and integrity. Worthy of admiration, too, was the celerity with which the reformers rallied from the shock of an internal counter revolution and regained in a few hours what seemingly had been lost in a night. It must be, Lord CURZON thought, the wish of all fair minded observers of recent events that a reinvigorated and reinspired Turkey might take a place among the nations of the world, and he assured the spokesmen of her Parliament that for encouragement and support they might rely on the unwavering sympathy of the liberty loving British people.

The Prophecy of Tearing Tom.

Without anger even in these burning days, yes, with friendliness and a sort of gratitude, we see once more, shining like the red planet Mars, the bright bronze poll of the Hon. TOM WATSON, the ever memorable Cracker Populist and historian. We haven't heard from him since the great day in 1907 when, returning from the White House, where the Tom Watson of Oyster Bay had been draining financial wisdom from him, he assaulted plutocracy and all but assaulted a Pullman conductor because he had to pay ten cents for four slices of bread. He survived that robbery, it seems. He rises on angry pinions and cries in passionate pain:

"With just such laws as ALDRICH and LONG and GALLAGHER and HALE—all of New England—are forcing through Congress the Union will be split into four or five parts, and this hemisphere will be all the happier for it."

Remembering a noble oration of

Tearing Tom's in the Fifty-second Congress, which he adorned and perturbed—a piece still spoken by the school children of McDuffie county: "We are on the eve of a social outbreak. We are at the crisis of our republican government"—recalling that high prophecy and its fulfillment, we hear with emotion this oracle from the bright bronze poll, as veridical, no doubt, as Friar BACON's brazen head, and yet the spirit of dissent stirs within us. This fourthing of the United States seems unlikely. The Middle States and New England would be one quarter, we suppose. Now, Tearing Tom is not the man to give any quarter to the plutocracy. And he is still willing to be President of the whole country.

For the present, then, we cannot look for a United States of quarter sections or even for the secession, peaceable or violent, of Tearing Tom.

The mountains of Manhattan—have you ever seen them? Of course not, but there is one fortunate mortal who has. He is a Dutch artist of commerce who recently had a vision—which he transferred to the service of the manufacturers of that fiery liquid which made Holland great. The vision was nothing less than a view of New York from the deck of the Half Moon, but a contemporary New York, with the Statue of Liberty and Brooklyn Bridge in the painting. We wish the artist might have given us a closer view of Manhattan, but he saw between himself and us the mighty proportions of a Dutch liner, so Manhattan is completely hidden, is only a blur and a blot at the foot of the mighty mountains which with deliberate aloft and rounding summit abut off the northern horizon. What Vesuvius is to Naples, Bouzarea to Algiers, the Rock to Gibraltar, these mysterious mountains are to Manhattan. They begin at Thirty-fourth street, they are not done at Yonkers. Are they the Heights of Harlem, the Catskills, or the Rocky Mountains—we do not know. The last if appearances count. But what difference does it make—they are the mountains of Manhattan and we never knew before how much we had missed them all these years.

"Governor HUGHES was elected to be not only the constitutional executive of all the people of the State of New York, but under the unwritten constitution he was elected to be a distinguished leader of his party."—The Hon. DOMESTIC DAYTON.

Does the "unwritten constitution" replace the "unwritten law"?

Dr. SMALL says the civilized races are slowly reverting to brute—Boston dispatch in the Tribune.

The devil they are!

Dr. LOUD fell into the President's vacation humors, and he was from his vacation humors. He said: "Enough for me to be doing, but not to be."—Beverly.

It was LONGFELLOW, wasn't it, who wrote:

"O gift of God, O perfect day
Whereof I feel the play;
Wherein it is enough for me
Not to be doing but to be."

Springfield is within the intellectual zone of Boston and all "wags" constitute a perfect rhyme in it. No highly educated Bostonian would pronounce the final letter in "Philadelphia" correctly.

"A monstrous tissue of errors unparalleled Springfield is within the intellectual zone of Agawam; and whatever else a 'highly educated Bostonian' is there any other kind?—may be guilty of, never, this side of the McLean Asylum, will he hit upon 'laws' with 'wars' or swallow a final 'r.' The land of the missing 'r' and the divided 'r' is Philadelphia itself."

Of Turtles, with a Severe View of a Distinguished Signer.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—"Foreign turtles are now on the free list," oh joy! If some other schedules have been advanced over the Dingy rates, what of it? Can't we get even on terrapin? If it amuses wonder that Mr. Taft publicly apologized for signing such a monstrous, insincere and, as concerns the corporation income tax, fraudulent bill. However, if Theodore Roosevelt's supine and mortgaged successor were possessed of a vestige of wit he would have abstained from giving his reasons on the basis of "Lex s'excuse, s'excuse." A. B. H. LEWIS, Mass., August 7.

Two Boston Institutions: One, Alani No More.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Historical accuracy, forsooth! Chorus persons do not inhabit the place; "musty" is absolutely unknown; "Pie or ally" is never heard of; it is merely vernacular. Musty ale was originated and brewed by a certain Mr. Musty, who has since died—did die—except the name—with Billy Park of sainted memory and brewed live lobsters at Park House, located a turn or two away from the Bell. Or more closely, as Billy described it, Young's Hotel was in the rear of Park's. And as for 11 P. M., the Bell, which is the only tavern on Py alley, closes at 9:30 with a general "Good night" and a Stenograph for each lingering patron.

Why is it, Mr. Editor, that every yapping New Yorker spends an hour and two bits in the Bell considering himself competent to write about those sacred precincts and instruct us in historical accuracy? HALF MUDDER BY ADIPTION. SIOUX FALLS, S. D., August 3.

The Shop Girl's Tascan.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—I can see nothing remarkable in the reply that the shop girl gave the philologist who sought for "Sempre giovane," nor in the pronunciation "Sempre juvane." But the philologist's supine and mortgaged successor were possessed of a vestige of wit he would have abstained from giving his reasons on the basis of "Lex s'excuse, s'excuse." A. B. H. LEWIS, Mass., August 7.

The Rage in Real Estate.

Randolph Augustus Malcolm Taft thought he was in real estate. Of course he was not supposed to speculate. He'd buy at the prevailing rate. And then, no doubt, would have to wait for some time indeterminate considering what he'd estimate. He'd be a grin commensurate.

Randolph Augustus Malcolm Taft got in the game a little late. He swallowed all the offered bait at prices quite inordinate. And thought his bargains really "great." But at no very distant date Randolph Augustus Malcolm Taft in business was unfortunate. He thought Smith might commiserate. Smith wept—he was in real estate! Jones, Robinson, strange to relate, both of them deep in real estate! His lot they could appreciate. To help him they'd not hesitate. But they were poor in real estate.

Randolph Augustus Malcolm Taft swore life was now inadequate. He chose a suicidal fate. He thought Smith might commiserate. As on his tomb to put the epitaph: "In death he still owns real estate!"

So you had better meditate On Randolph Augustus Malcolm Taft. LA TOUTIERE HANCOCK.

WORKING CLASS RENTS IN LONDON AND NEW YORK.

Two notable Parliamentary documents have been published recently on the cost of living among the working classes in the United Kingdom and in Germany. They contain the results of parallel investigations embracing house rents, wages and retail prices conducted by the British Board of Trade. Similar inquiries are now being carried on by the board in America, France and Belgium. When these are completed a comparison will be possible of the working class standards of living in the principal industrial nations. Meanwhile the British and German investigations, which are summarized in Nos. 77 and 78 of the Bulletin of the Bureau of Labor (Washington), have revealed certain general economic tendencies that have a bearing on the welfare of our local industrial population.

The price of living, for example, that of the two main elements, rents and prices, determining the cost of living, only the former varies greatly as between big and small cities. Indeed, the mere bigness of a city appears to have but slight influence on prices. Thus in Germany the price index number for Berlin is exceeded in a majority, or in nineteen of the thirty-three cities investigated. The price index number for London is exceeded in nine out of seventy-five towns in England and Wales. The difference between the maximum and minimum price index numbers is only eighteen points in England and Wales, and not more than fifteen points in Germany.

On the other hand, the difference between the highest and lowest rent index numbers is sixty-eight points in England and Wales and seventy-two points in Germany. The greater variation in rent index numbers is brought about solely by the extremely high cost of housing in London and in Berlin. If these urban centers of the first rank are excluded, together with Stuttgart, where rents are nearly as high as in Berlin, the variation of rents in the industrial cities of England and Wales and of Germany is not very great. Rents in Berlin exceed those of all other German towns investigated, except Stuttgart, to practically the same extent as rents in London exceed those in other towns of the United Kingdom.

The inquiry as regards wages was limited to standard industries represented in all towns, principally the building, engineering and printing trades. Wages in these industries were as a rule higher in London and in Berlin than in the smaller cities. Comparing prices, rents and wages, it was found that the London and the Berlin workingman enjoyed a higher standard of living than was achieved generally by members of the same trades elsewhere. Their "real" wages were higher, that is, the money which they earned was sufficient to buy more of the way of housing and food, including fuel, despite excessive rents. This circumstance no doubt accounts for the disproportionately rapid growth of big cities. They attract immigration apparently because of the superior standard of living which they offer. This was true of the industries covered by the investigation, and must be true in a large way with respect to other industries.

However, the investigation proved also that there was no very close connection between the local variations in the level of rent and prices combined and the level of the prevailing rates of wages. Indeed the relative levels of wages in different trades of each city frequently diverged to a remarkable extent. Thus, although the prevailing rates of wages of stucco workers averaged \$10.22 in Berlin as against \$6.57 in Breslau, the average for plumbers was only \$7.81 in Berlin as against \$6.57 in Breslau. It follows that to underpaid workmen, of whom there are many in every big city, although they do not constitute a majority, high rents are a source of poverty.

Poverty, however, is a relative condition, and what is a low standard of living in a highly prosperous community may appear to be a high standard of living elsewhere. The immigration to New York from the south and east of Europe represents an improvement in the economic condition of the new arrivals, while their numbers here serve to depress wages in certain unskilled trades. Indeed not a few industries are attracted to New York by the presence of cheap foreign labor. A notable example is the clothing industry, which has centered here largely because New York is the principal port of entry for European immigrants.

Wages in a majority of local trades are undoubtedly higher than in smaller American cities. This is unquestionably a case with respect to skilled mechanics, and where these are organized in strong unions they have frequently protected allied unskilled workmen against competition in the market for common labor. At the same time there are many trades in which the workmen are paid no more, perhaps less, than in smaller cities. In some trades wages are depressed by immigration; in others, including occasionally skilled occupations, wages are on the decline because of the introduction of improved machinery or because of reduced labor by contractors for a given product. To the community at large, therefore, it is a matter of importance whether working class rents are high or low, for whatever the prosperity and purchasing power of the bulk of the industrial population there is certain to be a numerous minority whose wages do not offset high rents.

Working class rents in New York and in London have this in common, that they embrace local taxation, which is not included in the cost of housing in Berlin. In London perhaps 18 per cent. of the rent represents taxes, as against about 10 per cent. in New York. Nevertheless our rents are excessive compared with those of London. In the British Board of Trade investigation London was divided into three zones, the inner, middle and outer or suburban zone, and the rents prevailing in the middle zone were adopted as typical of the city. If the inner zone corresponds to our East Side, the middle zone should be comparable with our Brownsville, reached from the Brooklyn end of the Williamsburg Bridge. Rents in Brownsville are probably as low as any in New York except in distinctly suburban localities. Here are the prevailing monthly working class rents in the middle zone of London and in Brownsville, New York:

Three rooms. Four rooms. Five rooms.

London (middle zone)	\$6.32	\$9.49	\$7.35	\$11.05	\$9.49	\$13.50
New York (Brownsville)	9.00	12.00	12.00	15.00	14.00	16.00

Neither the London nor the Brownsville rents include the cost of fuel. The Brownsville rents are those prevailing in the cheapest class of non-steam heated tenements. The London rents apply to small private houses, which form the type of working class housing in the British capital.

Of the three main elements entering into the standard of living two are determined by general influences and one by local fac-

tors. New York prices are established by the international competition of world markets and New York wages are influenced by labor conditions in, for example, Germany, England, Italy, Russia. New York is obliged to offer high wages to attract carpenters and masons from say southern Italy because the industrial north European countries are also in need of foreign mechanics; but most of these countries have large peasant populations from which to recruit unskilled city workers, so that the wage competition for unskilled labor from southern Italy, Russia and other backward countries is less keen. Such labor New York is therefore able to attract at relatively small wages.

Rents, on the other hand, are influenced primarily by local conditions—conditions over which the community is in a position to exercise a large measure of control. Chief among these in New York are inadequate local transportation and an excessively costly administration of public improvements. Just now a new era of suburban rapid transit is beginning which is certain to react favorably on working class rents, unless the community reorganizes its administration of public improvements and the advantages offered by the new transportation will be only partly utilized.

Improvements such as the opening, grading, paving, flagging and sewerage of new streets are carried out by the city and the cost is charged to property owners in the form of special assessments. This work is now conducted in the interest of politics, and the large amount of such work called for in The Bronx, for instance, has been one of the principal resources of Haffen in building up his political following. Waste and graft, whether "honest" or otherwise, in the administration of street improvements, tends to increase the price of land and thereby eventually to rents. Thus the average amount of special assessments charged to property owners in The Bronx is estimated to be not less than \$1,500 for each 35 foot lot.

THE BATTLE OF THE LEVELS.

The Change in Sentiment Continually Manifests Itself and Cannot Be Ignored—The Earthquake and the Canal.

From the Houston Daily Post.

The weight of scientific testimony is in favor of the sea level canal. When President Roosevelt invited a board of distinguished engineers from all parts of the world to investigate the question, most of them advised the sea level canal and largely because of the peril of seismic convulsions.

Why Mr. Roosevelt rejected the advice of the engineers we do not know, unless it be that the change in the sea level plan might have necessitated still greater expenditures.

It is obvious, however, that the massive works essential to the present project would be peculiarly subject to wreck in the event of such an earthquake as that which visited San Francisco. Any extensive faulting on the Isthmus might easily destroy in a moment all that has been accomplished by the expenditure of hundreds of millions and render the inauguration of the work de novo on the sea level plan.

It is not to be denied that the time that this had been accomplished the taxpayers of the United States might be out of pocket almost a billion dollars.

If the United States authorities even suspect that the sea level plan might have to be resorted to ultimately, it is reasonable to adopt that plan now than to await the destruction of great works.

The engineers are already in doubt as to the permanency of the Gatun Dam foundations, how can the Panama Canal be expected to escape such a shake as Mexico and Central America have suffered?

There are, of course, many reasons why a sea level canal would be preferable. The demands of commerce will in all likelihood render the Panama Canal obsolete and operative before many decades shall have passed and it would be easier to deal with a sea level project than with a lock system. Then, too, navigation is less hazardous and more satisfactory through a sea level canal.

It would be no matter to look to the possibilities in this case. The Pacific coast range is anything but stable, and we may awake some morning to find our great dream of an Isthmian canal shattered.

THE WOOD BISON COUNTRY.

Radford, the Explorer and Naturalist, Reports Progress to the Arctic Club.

Captain B. S. Osborn, secretary of the Arctic Club of America, has received from Harry V. Radford, the explorer, a letter of the following date, June 25, and written from Smith Landing, Slave River, Canada, 650 miles north of Edmonton:

"Safely arrived here, at the portal of the wood bison country, and on the eve of the seventh day's journey through the woods. Cannot go on at once, however, to begin the search for the bison, as the weather at this season is impassable, mosquito ridden swamp, so I am proceeding to Great Slave Lake and then to the Mackenzie River, which will be helpful later when the winter comes. I have one of the Great Slave Lake on the exploring journey toward the Arctic Circle."

It is a pleasure to skip down the Mackenzie, returning to this point (Smith Landing) by the end of the summer, and shall be glad to spend several months in acquiring first hand knowledge about those little known, but so important, bison lands. I had a dozen travelers have seen, which no white man ever killed and of which, of course, nothing is known scientifically, not a single specimen even having been measured in the flesh. The bison country is complete. I shall move again northward and be ready for a sterner effort in the barren grounds and may or may not be next spring, depending on circumstances. The journey from Edmonton here (650 miles) was accomplished with safety, but was full of discomfort for real hardships. The mosquitoes were and continue to be quite torturing. They are one of the worst trials in the north. We had one canoe accident in the rapids of the Athabasca that left four men hurt, but no one seriously injured. My Indian steersman lost control of the canoe in one of the worst pieces of water portaging I have ever had to do, following around and actually run the Little Cascade stern foremost!

On having a long time with the Chenevix language, trying to master it sufficiently to prosecute my zoological work. It is a very difficult language, spoken further south, on the Athabasca, had time to pick up only a few words, but the very method (eat and the substantive 'meat' (eating or food) being so commonly employed are always quickly acquired. I have made a list of the words in the visiting travelers in these regions.

The flag of the Arctic Club handed me by Admiral Schley, being a flag I carried in a document held worn on my person, and hope soon to unfurl it north of the Arctic Circle.

The Lincoln Tent Condensed.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—The Lincoln tent made by the Lincoln tent makers, with all the "new" made in a serious fault with them. "They won't go in a set machine."

J. H. McCARTHY.

BRIDGEPORT, Conn., August 8.

Homeward Bound.

Taft has gone to Beverly. Took away his laughter. He thought Smith might commiserate. Smith wept—he was in real estate! Jones, Robinson, strange to relate, both of them deep in real estate! His lot they could appreciate. To help him they'd not hesitate. But they were poor in real estate.

THE CORPORATION TAX.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Sir: The tax on the income of State corporations laid in the recently enacted tariff law will be assessed on incomes for the present year, that is now more than half expired. The inquiry into the management of New York corporations begins immediately. It therefore behooves every corporation to be prepared therefor and to test, if so minded, its constitutionality in advance of the assessment, as was done with the general income tax law of 1904. Under that precedent it would seem that any share owner, knowing that the directors intend to die the prescribed return and pay the tax, can apply to a Federal equity court to restrain them from so doing. If the restraint and control of strictly localized State corporations and their officers contemplated by the new law are repugnant to the Constitution an early decision will be for the general welfare.

Designated officers of all State corporations, without regard to their income, must make annual returns from this year of 1909 to the Commissioner of Internal Revenue at Washington, setting forth the details studiously elaborated in the statute, which details "shall constitute public records and be open to inspection as such." The corporation and its officers are to make the disclosures. If they do not criminal penalties will be inflicted.